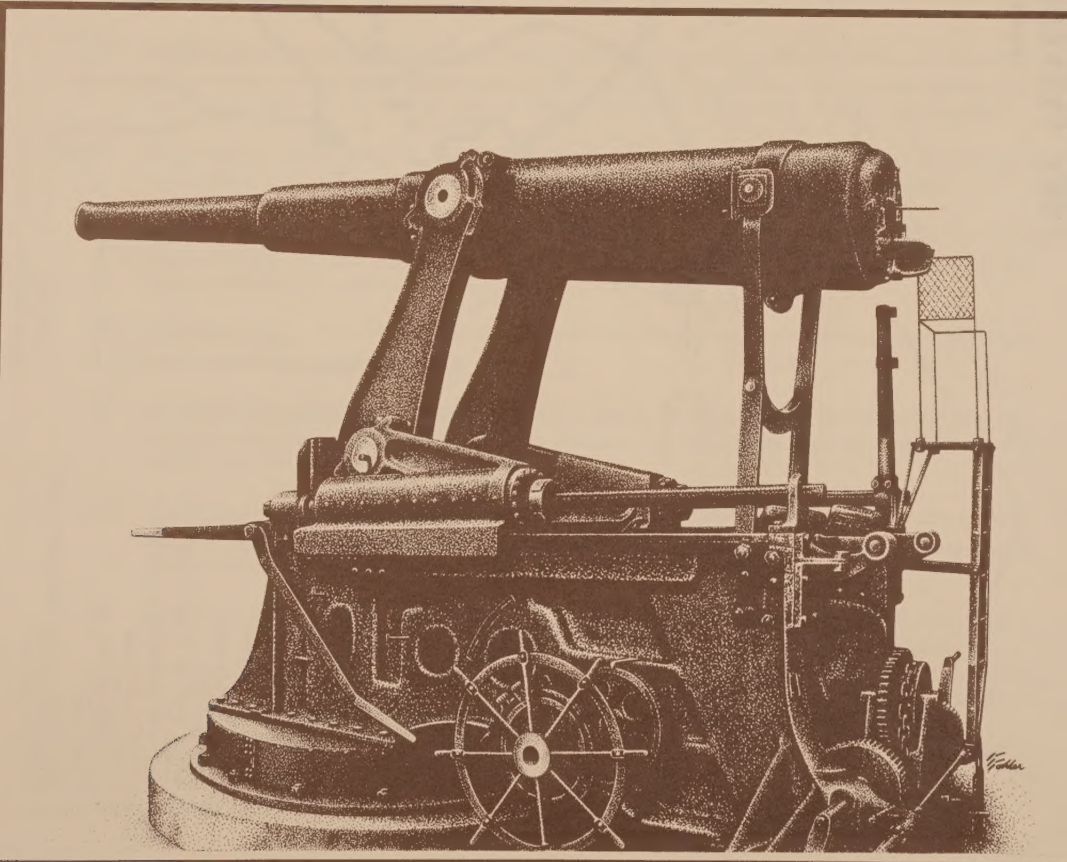
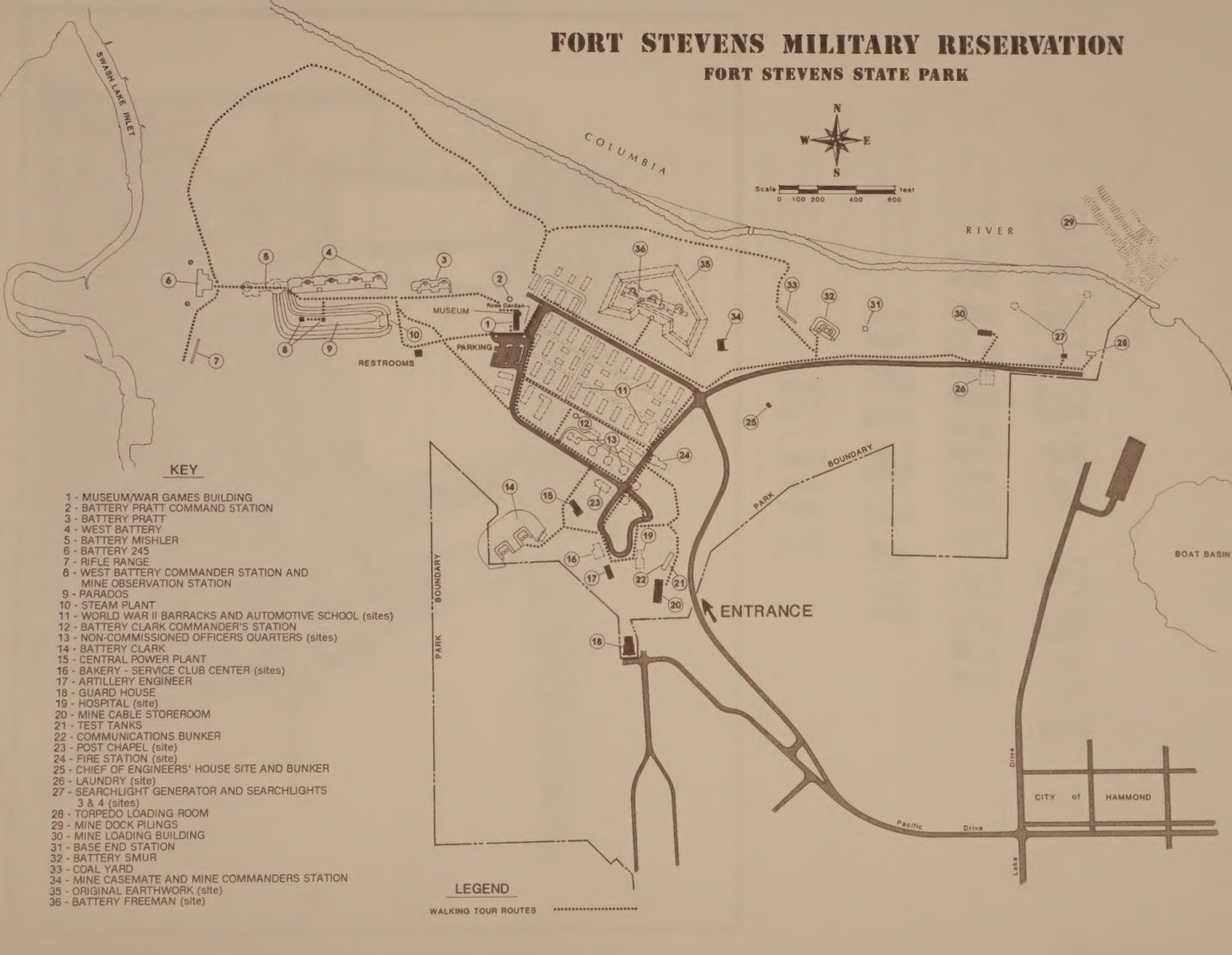
FORT STEVENS HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR



FORT STEVENS MILITARY RESERVATION

FORT STEVENS STATE PARK



KEY

1 - MUSEUM/WAR GAMES BUILDING
2 - BATTERY PRATT COMMAND STATION
3 - BATTERY PRATT
4 - WEST BATTERY
5 - BATTERY MISHLER
6 - BATTERY 245
7 - RIFLE RANGE
8 - WEST BATTERY COMMANDER STATION AND MINE OBSERVATION STATION
9 - PARADOS
10 - STEAM PLANT
11 - WORLD WAR II BARRACKS AND AUTOMOTIVE SCHOOL (sites)
12 - BATTERY CLARK COMMANDER'S STATION
13 - NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS QUARTERS (sites)
14 - BATTERY CLARK
15 - CENTRAL POWER PLANT
16 - BAKERY - SERVICE CLUB CENTER (sites)
17 - ARTILLERY ENGINEER
18 - GUARD HOUSE
19 - HOSPITAL (site)
20 - MINE CABLE STOREROOM
21 - TEST TANKS
22 - COMMUNICATIONS BUNKER
23 - POST CHAPEL (site)
24 - FIRE STATION (site)
25 - CHIEF OF ENGINEERS' HOUSE SITE AND BUNKER
26 - LAUNDRY (site)
27 - SEARCHLIGHT GENERATOR AND SEARCHLIGHTS 3 & 4 (sites)
28 - TORPEDO LOADING ROOM
29 - MINE DOCK PILINGS
30 - MINE LOADING BUILDING
31 - BASE END STATION
32 - BATTERY SMUR
33 - COAL YARD
34 - MINE CASEMATE AND MINE COMMANDERS STATION
35 - ORIGINAL EARTHWORK (site)
36 - BATTERY FREEMAN (site)

LEGEND

WALKING TOUR ROUTES .....

FORT STEVENS HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Fort stevens was constructed during the Civil War and remained active until shortly after World War II. From 1897 to 1904, the fort experienced a massive development program, including the construction of eight concrete gun batteries. Although the guns have all been removed, nearly all the batteries remain and are the primary features of this tour. After the army coast artillery abandoned Fort Stevens, nearly all of the buildings in the fort area were demolished. To realize what the fort looked like when it was an active military post, it helps to have a little imagination.

The tour takes approximately one hour for the first half (items 1 through 11) and approximately one hour for the second half (items 12 through 36).

1 MUSEUM/WAR GAMES BUILDING (1911) - Since its construction, the War Games Building has seen many uses. It was first an enlisted men's dormitory. Then, after World War I, it was converted to a War Games center with plotting equipment and communications with the various artillery batteries. When the fort became inactive, this building was used by the Corps of Engineers as their offices, and presently it houses the military museum and historical office.

2 BATTERY PRATT COMMAND STATION (c. 1900) - Originally, a small square structure set atop the surviving metal column. This tower was the control center for Battery Pratt. Later, it was a meteorological station for the fort.

3 BATTERY PRATT (1900) - Named for 1st Lt. James P. Pratt, who was killed in action during the Civil War, this battery remained active until 1945. It was armed with two 6-inch rifles on disappearing carriages. These guns were originally supplemental fire power to the West Battery. Just before World War II, Battery Pratt was modernized to protect the Columbia River mine fields.

4 WEST BATTERY (1898-1900) - The six 10-inch rifles on the West Battery were the primary weapons for Fort Stevens. With a strategic location on the Columbia River, the heavy 10-inch shells were designed to penetrate the exterior armor of enemy ships. In about 1908, the three pairs of guns in West Battery were individually named: Batteries Lewis, Walker and Mishler. Battery Lewis was named for Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition; Battery Walker for Col. Leverett H. Walker, commanding officer of Fort Stevens 1906-1907; and Battery Mishler for 1st Lt. Lyman Mishler, killed in action in 1862. The four guns of batteries Lewis and Walker were removed during World War I and shipped to France to help bolster the allied defenses.

5 BATTERY MISHLER (1900) - Perhaps the most interesting feature at Fort Stevens is Battery Mishler. It was different from batteries Lewis and Walker in that it had circular gun pits with 360° fields of fire. The two guns remained in the battery as a curiosity during the years of lax security between the wars. At the beginning of World War II, the pits were covered over and it wasn't until the end of the war that the guns were removed. At the same time, interior tunnels were transformed into the harbor entrance control post for all military forces at the mouth of the Columbia River. Battery Mishler is the only one of its kind to be seen in the United States. Guided, narrated tours of the battery are available to the public from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

6 BATTERY 245 (1944) - During World War II, a group of batteries was constructed along the west coast to supplement the harbor defenses. Battery 245 was constructed at Fort Stevens and batteries 246 and 247 were constructed at forts Columbia and Canby across the river. These World War II batteries were armed with two 6-inch rifles on Barbette or pedestal type mounts. The guns at 245 were mounted and fired, but the guns on the other side of the river were never fired. Today, two 5-inch 38 caliber navy guns sit on either side of the battery. These were installed in 1979 because of their similarity to the original 6-inch guns.

7 RIFLE RANGE (c. 1942) - Built during World War II, this was used as a training area for use of M-1 rifles.

8 WEST BATTERY COMMANDER STATION (1899) and MINE OBSERVATION STATION (1911) - The command station in the west end of the Parados controlled all firing from the guns in the West Battery. The east bunker was used to site enemy ships in the Columbia River and their proximity to the sea mines.

9 PARADOS (1897) - The Parados was a concept developed by the brilliant French military designer, Vauban, that consisted of a constructed embankment of earth at the back edge of an emplacement to protect it from a rear attack. This parados was designed for protection from the rear, but it also protected the West Battery, by limiting the area of fire from the Columbia River. In a period of attack, the gun crews could effectively operate in the area without fear of flying fragments from enemy ship bombardments.

10 STEAM PLANT (c.1900) - Electrical power was produced from this plant to operate the West Battery. In 1920, the plant was converted into a reserve power plant to supplement the Central Power Plant (this plant will be seen later in the tour).

11 WORLD WAR II BARRACKS (1941) AND AUTOMOTIVE SCHOOL (1941) - A little imagination will help in this area. None of the buildings remain, but it is easy to think to a time when the area was busy with men circulating around. The small foundations were at one end of the building and were for the restrooms and boiler room. The rest of the building was wooden and set on concrete piers. The buildings were two stories high and housed 44 men in each.

12 BATTERY CLARK COMMANDER'S STATION (1899) - Around this concrete column was a five-story building that directed the firing of Battery Clark.

13 NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS' QUARTERS (1907-1908) - With brick foundations and brick cisterns behind each house, these are among the oldest remains of buildings within the historical fort area. Each building was a two-story duplex.

14 BATTERY CLARK (1899) - Named for William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, this was the only mortar battery at Fort Stevens. Originally, Battery Clark was armed with eight 12-inch mortars; then, in 1917, four of the mortars were moved across the river to Battery Guenther in Fort Canby. The move was made to provide mortar fire from another location at the mouth of the Columbia River and to make the operation of Battery Clark more efficient. With eight mortars, about 30 men were required to operate each pair of guns. As a result, the gun pits were overcrowded, dangerous and inefficient. The removal of four mortars solved these problems and about the same number of shots could be fired with the new arrangement.

15 CENTRAL POWER PLANT (1910) - Fort Stevens' power plant was oil-fueled, producing steam for the electrical generators. This plant produced electrical power for the entire fort complex, with an auxiliary plant at the east end of the Parados. There was also a separate plant to produce power for Battery Russell and a small plant to power the searchlights.

16-17 BAKERY, POST SERVICE CLUB (c. 1900) and ARTILLERY ENGINEER (c. 1900) -Men at Fort Stevens baked their own bread, and when something required fixing at one of the batteries, the artillery engineers were called in to fix the problem. Sometimes the work was done in this building. Later the bakery was remodeled as service club center.

18 GUARDHOUSE (1908) - Occasionally (especially on pay day), men stationed at the fort would get disorderly. When this happened, they spent time in this building. The Guardhouse is open to the public on a limited schedule during the summer months.

19 HOSPITAL (c. 1910) - This two-story building served the medical needs of the men. During World War I, the swine flu devastated Fort Stevens and an estimated 50 men died in this building from the epidemic.

20 MINE CABLE STOREROOM (1910) - All materials for the operation of sea mines were kept in this building, except for the explosives. The explosives were loaded into the mines at a different location in the fort.

21-22 COMMUNICATIONS BUNKER (1922) and TEST TANKS - This bomb and gas proof building was the center of all communications for the fort. A large switchboard monitored activities and communications. The structures in front of this building were the test tanks used to test the cable used for the sea mines.

23-24 POST CHAPEL (1941) and FIRE STATION (1941) - The religious and emergency needs of the fort were met in these buildings. The church was appropriately painted white and the fire station red.

25 CHIEF OF ENGINEERS' HOUSE SITE (1898) AND BUNKER - This house was constructed for the Chief Engineer during fort and jetty construction. The wood panelled concrete bunker was built after the Japanese shelled Fort Stevens in 1942.

26 LAUNDRY (1941) - The Post Laundry was privately constructed, owned and operated until 1945, when it was transferred to command of the Army.

27 SEARCHLIGHT GENERATOR and SEARCHLIGHTS 3 AND 4 (1918) - A small power generating plant was located in this building providing power for the two mine field searchlights. Toward the north, over the small mound, are the two searchlight stands.

28 TORPEDO LOADING ROOM (1900) - When this facility was used, a metal structure covered the concrete base and tank. Torpedoes were tested in the water tank, then loaded onto railroad cars and transported to a nearby loading dock.

29 MINE DOCK PILINGS (1894) - Earliest plans for Fort Stevens show a dock at approximately this location. By 1874, the shoreline had changed significantly enough to necessitate an extension of the original block. In about 1910, the mine operation at the mouth of the Columbia required the construction of a substantial docking facility including a railroad track for loading the mines onto boats. During World War II the mine loading docks were further improved in anticipation of potential naval assaults.

30 MINE LOADING BUILDING (1941) - In this building the explosive charges were loaded into the sea mines, then transported to the mine dock on railroad cars. This building replaced an earlier mine loading building that was probably located near the mine casemate.

31 BASE END STATION (1900) - This small bunker was used as an observation and security post for the east end of the fort. Evidence suggests that it was not used after 1920.

32 BATTERY SMUR (1902) - Named for 3rd Lt. Elias Smur, killed during the War of 1812, this battery was armed with two 3-inch rapid fire guns. Battery Smur was designed to protect mine operations in the Columbia River. It was deactivated in 1920 and the guns were removed and scrapped.

33 COAL YARD (1902) - Little is known about this area. Since the power plants were fueled by oil, it is probable that coal was used to heat the fort buildings.

34 MINE CASEMATE AND MINE COMMANDER'S STATION (1918) - From this structure, all the mines on the Oregon side of the Columbia River were controlled. Orders to detonate the sea mines came from the Mine Commander's Station to the south of the casemate. All mines were electrically detonated and for extra protection, the casemate was gas and bomb proof. During World War II this casemate was inactive. All sea mines in the Columbia River were controlled from Fort Columbia on the Washington side of the river.

35-36 ORIGINAL EARTHWORK (1863) - BATTERY FREEMAN (1902) - Because of the presence of British and Confederate sea raiders in the area, President Lincoln ordered the construction of fortifications at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1863. On the Oregon side, Fort Stevens, a five-sided earthen fort surrounded by a moat, was built at Point Adams. Armament consisted of 26 guns, including seventeen 10-inch muzzle loading Rodman cannons, which could fire a 128-pound cannonball over a mile. Fort Stevens was completed and occupied by troops in 1864. The fortification successfully defended the Columbia River, and is the only fort of its type on the west coast of the United States. During the modernization program around the turn of the century, a new battery was constructed within the original earthwork. Battery Freeman, named for Lt. Col. Constant Freeman who served in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, was armed with two 6-inch rifles on Barbette pedestal carriages and one 3-inch gun on a pedestal mount. All guns were removed from Battery Freeman in 1920, and the battery, along with the earthwork, was leveled in 1940 to make way for a parade ground.

If this tour has stimulated an interest in coast artillery activities, there are exhibits in the Museum for you to see, as well as a 1941 film showing the guns firing. The Museum/War Games Building is where this tour begins. We also invite you to visit Battery Russell and Fire Control Hill, located one-half mile south of the Historical area. If you have any questions regarding this tour of Fort Stevens, please feel free to ask one of the park personnel.

Fort Stevens State Park
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OREGON STATE PARKS

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